AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1.   (Original) A method for generating a cloud free and cloud-shadow free image from a plurality of images of a region, the method including the steps of:

(a) ranking pixels in order of cloudiness and shallowness;

(b) using a conditional majority filter on the plurality of images of the region to include as large a patch of neighbouring good pixels from each of the plurality of images as possible;

(c) generating cloud and shadow masks by classifying a group of pixels as cloud, shadow, or noncloud-nonshadow; and

(d) creating a mosaic from the plurality of images to form the cloud free and cloud-shadow free image.

2.   (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein each pixel in each of the images is ranked according to predefined ranking criteria, and the highest ranked pixels are used to compose the mosaic.

3.   (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2,

wherein size and shape information of bright pixel clusters are used to discriminate

any bright land surfaces and buildings from clouds.

4.   (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3

claim 1, wherein solar illumination direction, sensor viewing direction and typical

cloud heights information is used to predict likely locations of cloud shadows.

5.   (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4

claim 1, where intensity gradients are used to search for locations of cloud shadows

near cloud edges.

6.   (Original) A method as claimed in claim 5, further including the step of

applying a morphological filter to the cloud masks detected by the intensity gradients

to locate and include thin clouds around the edges of thick clouds.

7.   (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6

claim 1, wherein the plurality of images is panchromatic satellite images.

8.   (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, wherein the plurality of images is multi-spectral images.

9.   (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 8~~ claim 1, wherein the highest raking pixels are considered as good pixels and the lowest ranking pixels are considered as bad pixels.

10.   (Original) A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the good pixels are further classified into vegetation pixels and building pixels.

11.   (Original) A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the building pixels include land clearings.

12.   (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 10 ~~or claim 11,~~ wherein the classification depends on whether the pixel intensity is below or above a threshold for vegetation pixels.

13.   (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~any one of claims 9 to 12~~ claim 9, wherein darker good pixels are preferred over brighter good pixels.

14.   (Currently Amended) A cloud free and cloud-shadow free image produced by the method of ~~any one of claims 1 to 13~~ claim 1.

15.   (Currently Amended) A computer usable medium having a computer program code which is configured to cause a processor to execute one or more steps to enable a computer to perform the method of ~~any one of claims 1 to 13~~ claim 1.